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Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The World Summit for Social Development was held at Copenhagen in March 1995, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/92 of 16 December 1992, in which the Assembly decided to convene a summit at the level of heads of State or Government. The Summit adopted the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[1] and the Programme of Action,[2] which was endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995.

2. At its fifty-first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/202 of 17 December 1996, in which, *inter alia*, it requested the Secretary-General to report at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. It will be recalled that the Secretary-General submitted a report on the subject to the Assembly at its fifty-first session (A/51/348). The present report contains selective information on initiatives/activities that have taken place since the issuance of that report, bearing in mind that many of the initiatives and recommendations contained in the previous report are of a continuing nature. It should also be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (A/52/315) which is also before the Assembly at the current session.

II. Overview of follow-up activities initiated in 1997

A. Initiatives of national Governments

3. Heads of State and Government have recognized that social development and the implementation of the commitments made at Copenhagen are primarily the responsibility of Governments, although international cooperation and assistance are essential for their full implementation. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 50/161 and 51/202, reiterated the Summit's call to Governments to define time-bound goals and targets for reducing overall poverty and eradicating absolute poverty, expanding employment and reducing unemployment, and enhancing social integration, within each national context; and to assess on a regular basis national progress towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, possibly in the form of periodic national reports outlining successes, problems and obstacles, and to submit such information on a voluntary basis to the Commission for Social Development.

4. Since the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/51/348), countries have provided additional information, both during the consideration of the item on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, and at the thirty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development, as well as by communications addressed to the Secretary-General. The information covers administrative arrangements set in place by Governments, such as designation of focal points and establishment of committees and commissions, as well as substantive measures such as elaboration of policies, formulation of programmes and organization of seminars, such as the Copenhagen seminars for social progress organized by Denmark, host Government of the Summit, to enrich the discourse and formulate common concepts and strategies on issues addressed by the Summit. This and other examples of national initiatives are set out in the annex to the present report.

5. With regard to regional follow-up, the General Assembly, at both its fiftieth and fifty-first sessions, renewed the Summit's invitation to the regional commissions, within their mandates and in cooperation with the regional intergovernmental organizations and banks, to convene, on a biennial basis, a meeting at a high political level to review the progress made towards implementing the outcome of the Summit.

6. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) organized the First Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development at São Paulo from 6 to 9 April 1997. The Conference, which represented a continuation of the efforts made by the countries in the region to follow up on the commitments made at Copenhagen, was attended by States members of the Commission, observers from States Members of the United Nations, observer States of the United Nations, representatives from the United Nations Secretariat and organizations of the United Nations system, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as guests from all sectors of society. Participating countries presented reports on implementation of the commitments undertaken at the Summit; a ministerial round table was held on macroeconomic management and its impact on poverty; panel discussions were organized on the three core issues of the Summit; and the ECLAC secretariat presented a document entitled "The Equity Gap, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Social Summit", which contained a diagnostic analysis of the social situation in the countries of the region; a summary of the economic and social reforms under way in the region; and policy proposals for the attainment of the objectives of the Summit.

7. The Conference adopted the São Paulo Consensus, in which the ECLAC member countries renewed their commitment to actions required to achieve the objectives agreed upon in Copenhagen, and agreed, *inter alia*, to prioritize the issues on the social agenda and to ensure an appropriate allocation of resources in order to incorporate social equity into growth; guarantee that social development was a State priority that demanded not only appropriate government action but also the ongoing participation of civil society; intensify the complementarity between high, stable growth rates and human development; strengthening the role of social policies as State policies in the quest for higher levels of social equity and social integration; ensure integrated approaches to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development; and establish a regional information database of successful experiences in the field of social policy. Finally, the ECLAC member countries requested the secretariat of the Commission to convene a further meeting within two years to analyse the progress that had been made and the obstacles that remain as regards social development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1997/56 of 23 July 1997, adopted at its substantive session of 1997, welcomed the convening of the meeting, expressed its appreciation for the São Paulo Consensus and invited other regions to convene their respective evaluation meetings on the Summit.

8 The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) will be convening the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development at Manila from 5 to 11 November 1997 to review national progress achieved and regional actions taken in the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development in the ESCAP region, in the context of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development; and to consider means of accelerating the implementation of the regional Agenda at the national and regional levels.

9. In the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, the Government of Austria has decided to host an expert group meeting on employment questions in February 1998, as a follow-up to the Summit.

B. Mobilization of financial resources

10. In its resolution 50/161, the General Assembly recognized that the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action would require the mobilization of financial resources at the national and international levels. In its resolution 51/202, the Assembly stressed the importance of encouraging national initiatives for social development, including, *inter alia*, credit for people living in poverty, particularly women, along the model of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh in connection with self-employment and income generation to address the feminization of poverty, and noted with interest the micro credit summit to be held in Washington, D.C., in February 1997.

11. The Micro credit Summit was attended by over 2,000 persons from 137 countries. The Micro credit Summit Declaration launched a nine-year campaign for an effort to expand the reach of credit for self-employment and other financial and business services to 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families, by the year 2005. The Summit also recognized that building institutions capable of providing micro finance services was only one of a broad range of strategies in eradicating poverty.

12. Immediately following the Micro credit Summit, a one-day meeting was held at the United Nations to discuss the link between access to credit and poverty eradication in Africa. United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations discussed how the improvement of access to credit could empower Africa's poor, particularly women, to become more active participants in the development process, thereby freeing themselves from poverty. The impact that access to micro credit could have on food security, women's economic empowerment, employment and self-employment, as well as provision of basic social services, were some of the topics discussed, and ways of linking the traditional banking systems to micro credit to facilitate access by the poor to credit were also examined.

13. With regard to the question of the impact of structural adjustment programmes on economic and social development, the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 1997, welcomed the decision of the Interim Committee of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to make the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) a permanent facility. The Council, however, called for further efforts to ensure that internationally supported adjustment programmes, including ESAF-supported programmes, incorporate social safety measures and restructuring of public expenditure, including increases in expenditure related to primary education and primary health services, in line with the recommendations of the World Summit for Social Development. The Council further stated that the speed and sequencing of these programmes and safeguards for social equity are critical for their success.

14. Also at the substantive session of 1997 of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General submitted a report on new and innovative ideas for generating funds for globally agreed commitments and priorities (A/52/203-E/1997/85). The report was prepared in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and was based on the premise that the funds so generated should neither be viewed as a source for financing the regular budget nor the peacekeeping budget of the United Nations. It discusses public-private partnerships in mobilizing finance for achieving development objectives, and national charges and fees drawing particularly upon national experiences in the past few years in the area of environment protection. Specific recommendations were put forward for consideration by the Council. After holding deliberations, the Council, in its decision 1997/313 of 25 July 1997, took note of the report of the Secretary-General.

C. Other actions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997

15. At its high-level segment held from 2 to 4 July 1997, the Economic and Social Council carried out a comprehensive review of the theme "Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows, investment and trade". It had before it a report of the Secretary-General (E/1997/67). The Council subsequently adopted agreed conclusions (see E/1997/L.56) on the subject which, *inter alia*, provided a framework for international cooperation and national policies and the role of the United Nations system. The conclusions also addressed policy issues, including the need for an international dialogue on issues of policy cohesion; the concern of marginalization faced by many developing countries, the least developed countries and vulnerable groups in the context of globalization of the world economy; the importance of reversing the overall decline in flows of official development assistance and of achieving internationally agreed official development assistance targets as soon as possible; the urgent need for effective and equitable, development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries; the importance of sound macroeconomic policies, which remain an essential ingredient to prevent volatility, particularly on international financial markets; the particular importance of growth in foreign direct investment in developing countries; and the need for an open, rule-based, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable multilateral trading system as a key element in fostering an enabling environment for development.

16. In the area of poverty eradication, the Council considered, at its substantive session of 1997, the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the 1996 coordination segment of the Council on the coordination of the United Nations system for the eradication of poverty (E/1997/58), and adopted resolution 1997/60 of 25 July 1997 on "Eradication of poverty", in which it reaffirmed that the goal of eradicating poverty in the world was an ethical, social, political and economic imperative; welcomed the steps already taken by the functional commissions, in particular the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, to implement the recommendations of the Council on the coordination of the multi-year programmes of the functional commissions related to poverty eradication; and decided to carry out in 1999 an overall review of the theme of poverty eradication in order to contribute to the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 for the overall review of the Summit and to the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action.

17. The Council also adopted resolution 1997/61 of 25 July 1997 on integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits, in which it, *inter alia*, reaffirmed the need to continue to ensure the harmonization and coordination of the agendas and work programmes of the functional commissions by promoting a clearer division of labour among them and by providing clear policy guidance to them; and stressed the importance of ensuring that reports on conference follow-up submitted to the Council and its functional commissions draw on the experiences gained at all levels; it also stressed the need, for that purpose, of enhancing cooperation in the preparation of such reports between relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations funds and programmes.

D. United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations system

18. In the United Nations Secretariat, the responsibility of assisting in the implementation of the follow-up to the Summit and the servicing of the intergovernmental bodies involved rests with the newly created Department for Economic and Social Affairs. The Department is also entrusted with the role of focal point for the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. The Department will continue to work with all actors in social

development, including Governments, United Nations organizations, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the civil society in assisting in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. Initiatives such as organizing and participating in workshops and seminars, conducting research on themes addressed by the Summit, have been pursued and will intensify. At the same time, the Secretary-General continues his dialogue with heads of State and Government, inviting them to accelerate the momentum of implementing the commitments reached at Copenhagen and urging them to use sessions of the Commission for Social Development, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, as well as through the commissions, to report successes, problems and obstacles in the implementation of those commitments.

19. It will be recalled that three ad hoc inter-agency task forces (on basic social services for all; on employment and sustainable livelihoods; and on the enabling environment for social and economic development), as well as the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, were established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in 1995 to provide system-wide, coherent support to national actions, to follow up decisions of recent international conferences in the economic, social and related areas, including, specifically, the World Summit for Social Development.

20. Members of the Commission for Social Development had the opportunity to be informed of the work of these bodies by their respective chairpersons at the Commission's special session in 1996 and its thirty-fifth session in 1997. The Chairman's summaries of the two dialogues are set out in the respective reports of the Commission to the Economic and Social Council.[3] An account of the work of the inter-agency task forces and committee, including the elements particularly relevant to follow-up activities to the Summit, is contained in the report of the Secretary-General on integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits (E/1997/73) submitted to the Council. In its resolution 1997/61 of 25 July 1997, the Council stressed the need for the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure that there was effective inter-agency support to the work of the intergovernmental bodies dealing with conference follow-up, including the Council and its functional commissions, that there was regular updating and feedback on the incorporation of the work of the task forces at the country level; and that the Council should be kept fully informed of the work and decisions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination concerning integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

21. UNDP continues to assist countries in following up Summit commitments to poverty eradication, at the country, regional and global levels. Important results have included increased gender mainstreaming in development programming, increased possibilities for UNDP to be engaged in the development of micro finance sectors as a tool for poverty alleviation, self-employment and social integration of excluded groups, and the broadening of the institutional base for civil society organization cooperation with the United Nations system.

22. The *Human Development Report 1997* is devoted to an analysis of global poverty, including suggestions on new ways to measure it (the new human poverty index) and a framework for combatting it. With the additional support of the poverty strategies initiative (a multi-donor programme launched immediately following the Summit) UNDP is working with over 80 countries in supporting national anti-poverty strategies in various stages of preparation. In partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP has also initiated efforts in several countries to explore the feasibility of promoting 20/20 compacts. It is also involved in planning the international "second-stage" event as a sequel to the 1996 Oslo meeting on 20/20 convened by the Government of Norway.

23. UNDP participated actively in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods, chaired by the International Labour Organization (ILO), led two of the seven country reviews and prepared a note on operationalizing the concept of "sustainable livelihoods". The sustainable livelihoods approach can provide added structure to employment/livelihood strategies, permitting more sensitive analysis and policy determination for those actually living in poverty. Notable in this context is the UNDP MicroStart Pilot Programme, which was designed to respond to the rapid developments in the micro finance sector. MicroStart provides institutional and capital support to micro finance institutions and networks in 25 pilot countries, thereby increasing direct access to financial services and building on the indigenous economic capacity of poor people and microentrepreneurs.

24. UNDP also supported a project on social exclusion that analysed the processes and patterns that prevent people from taking part in the economic and social life of their community. It also addressed the question of what kind of policies are required to promote the social integration of excluded groups. Building upon the results of the project,

UNDP is currently exploring ways in which the analysis of exclusion could make anti-poverty strategies more effective. Issues of exclusion and the breakdown of social ties are also being used to analyse and develop policy and programme directives on how development programmes can contribute to the rebuilding of the social fabric in societies torn apart by civil conflict and violence.

25. The International Labour Office was designated as task manager with the principal responsibility of preparing the report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme: productive employment and sustainable livelihoods (E/CN.5/1997/3), which was submitted to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fifth session. The report, described under section III below, contains a number of recommendations for consideration and discussion by the Commission. The report on world employment 1996-97 published by the International Labour Office also provided the basis for a number of discussions on the subject, including a seminar organized by the Secretariat (see paras. 42-48 below).

26. The International Labour Office also chaired the Administrative Committee on Coordination Task Force on Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods. A number of comprehensive country-level employment reviews were undertaken, the framework of which encompassed the major features affecting the level and quality of employment, including national macroeconomic and sectoral policies covering such issues as savings, investment and enterprise development; labour market policies and institutions; democratic policy-making and social dialogue; gender discrimination and child labour; and trade and capital flows and migratory movements. The country reviews were conducted in Hungary, Nepal, Indonesia, Morocco, Zambia, Mozambique and Chile and were completed by February 1997. A 15-point set of guidelines was drawn up by the Task Force, which stated that a sound macroeconomic policy framework needed to be established; priority had to be given to efforts to expand productive employment in both the farm and non-farm sectors; the general level of education and of technical competence of the labour force had a vital bearing on increasing productivity, efficiency and international competitiveness; countries must design and formulate clearly a strategy for full employment and sustainable livelihoods based on social dialogue with the fullest possible degree of involvement of employers' and workers' organizations; a comprehensive strategy was needed in response to the discrimination faced by women; targeted programmes and policies were needed to remedy accentuated forms of environmental degradation and to assure sustainability of development; and liberalization and structural adjustment policies should be pursued to stimulate greater private sector participation, greater integration of countries into the world economy and enhanced competitiveness of domestic industry and better use of technology and capital.

27. The World Bank convened high-level expert meetings in 1996 and 1997 on the subject of "social capital", as part of its work on sustainable development and the measure of the wealth of nations which was stimulated by the Summit. In addition to natural capital, physical or produced capital, and to the now widely accepted notion of human capital, social capital refers to the functioning of the various institutions that are critical to individual welfare and social integration. Social capital can be depleted, for example, by corruption and political alienation. It can be enhanced, for instance, by ethical behaviour and trust among economic partners. Work on this concept of social capital will enhance the understanding and measurement of the development process.

E. Civil society

28. The Summit and the General Assembly both reaffirmed the need for effective partnership and cooperation between Governments and the relevant actors of civil society, the social partners and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of and follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The Assembly, in its resolution 51/202, encouraged non-governmental organizations to participate in the work of the Commission for Social Development. The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1997/298 of 23 July 1997, decided, as an interim measure, to invite those non-governmental organizations that were accredited to the Summit to attend the thirty-sixth session of the Commission, provided that they had started the process of application for consultative status in accordance with Council decision 1996/315 of 14 November 1996. It should be noted that representation and participation of non-governmental organizations at the thirty-fifth session of the Commission was the highest in the history of the Commission.

29. Since the World Summit for Social Development, the various actors of civil society have played a major role in supporting follow-up activities to the Summit, to remind Governments of their commitments made at Copenhagen and to sensitize public opinion on follow-up activities. In that connection, conferences, seminars and symposia have been organized at national, regional and international levels. Operational activities have been conducted at the field level. A few examples are given below.

30. The Business Association for the World Summit for Social Development has contributed to the establishment of an International Business Advisory Council. The Council brings together governmental bodies, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and entrepreneurs from different countries to work on common strategies aimed at fighting unemployment and promoting social progress and development.

31. The International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), in collaboration with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, organized a non-governmental organization forum on the items before the Commission for Social Development just before the opening of the thirty-fifth session of the Commission. ICSW supports the holding of regional ministerial meetings on the follow-up to the Summit by organizing a non-governmental organization forum before each meeting. Such a meeting took place at São Paulo in April 1997 for the Latin American region. Another meeting is scheduled for November 1997 in Manila, the Philippines, for the Asian and Pacific region. In addition to the launching of the *Social Development Review*, ICSW has developed a website on social development and the Summit.

32. In 1996, the initiative "Social Watch" was launched by a group of non-governmental organizations to monitor social development policies and programmes formulated and carried out by countries in implementing decisions of the Summit. In the 1997 edition, the emphasis is on issues such as the dimensions of poverty and globalization and the status of women. A description of follow-up actions taken by 25 countries is also featured. The organization participated effectively at the Commission for Social Development and continues its efforts to work actively in the social development field, gathering statistics and data for the analysis and comparison between national reports. A workshop on social indicators will be organized by Social Watch in Montevideo at the end of August with the aim of perfecting their methodology and instruments, so as to enhance the efficiency of organizations of the civil society in their monitoring activities.

33. In May 1997, ICFTU convened a symposium on structural adjustment, globalization and employment creation at Dakar. Attended by over 100 union leaders from the African region, the symposium was a microcosm of important parts of the development debate and its implications on societies and economies of African countries. Also attending the meeting were representatives of the United Nations system, the African Development Bank, the European Union and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

34. The European Federation for the Welfare of the Elderly organized a conference on "Elimination of Poverty in Old Age" in December 1996, in the context of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. The Conference was also viewed as a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and a preparatory activity for the International Year of the Older Person in 1999.

III. Priority theme for 1997: productive employment and sustainable livelihoods

A. Commission for Social Development

35. In its resolution 1996/7 of 22 July 1996, the Economic and Social Council decided that the Commission for Social Development, as a functional commission of the Council, should have the primary responsibility for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the Summit, and decided to enlarge the Commission's membership from 32 to 46 and to annualize its meetings. The Council also decided on a new structure of the agenda and multi-year programme of work of the Commission for the years 1997-2000, with "Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development" as its substantive item.

36. The thirty-fifth session of the Commission took place in New York from 25 February to 6 March 1997, and considered the priority theme of productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, with three specific topics: (a) the centrality of employment in policy formulation, including a broader recognition of work and employment; (b) improving access to productive resources and infrastructure; and (c) enhanced quality of work and employment. For the consideration of the priority theme, the Commission had before it the report of the Secretary-General prepared in cooperation with the International Labour Office, with contributions from the United Nations system (E/CN.5/1997/3).

37. It was noted that during the last couple of decades, the goal of full employment had been displaced by concern about containing inflation, public spending and fiscal deficits, resulting in an increase in unemployment and underemployment in most countries. It called for more balanced priorities that would put employment growth at the centre of economic and social policy-making without displacing those other important goals. The report also noted

that "high and productive levels of employment ... are fundamental means of combating poverty, of ensuring equity, of meeting peoples' aspirations for participation in economic and social life, and for preserving social cohesion" (E/CN.5/1997/3, para. 6).

38. Among the recommendations made in the report were an emphasis on the importance of increasing economic growth rates in order to increase the rate of employment growth, and a recognition that this would require political and social as well as macroeconomic stability; the importance of moderating the excesses of structural adjustment strategies; an acknowledgement that for certain countries, "a more gradual and selective approach to trade liberalization may be warranted" (ibid., para. 25); and the value of policy incentives to offset market failure.

39. The Commission subsequently adopted resolution 35/2,[4] which contains a set of agreed conclusions on productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, and decided to transmit them to the high-level segment of the 1997 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. Although many of the conclusions reiterated the commitments made at the Social Summit, the following new or strengthened commitments may be noted. The Commission recognized the importance of:

(a) Full, productive, appropriately and adequately remunerated and freely chosen employment as a central object of economic and social policies;

(b) Setting time-bound goals and targets for expanding employment and reducing unemployment;

(c) Increasing productivity in rural and urban informal sectors through improving access to credit, fertile land, productive inputs, infrastructure, basic social services, information and extension services;

(d) Balanced macroeconomic policies to ensure employment growth, price stability and low interest rates;

(e) Maximizing the quality and accessibility of such social services as education and health both to improve well-being and to increase employment;

(f) Promoting lifelong learning, beginning with basic education and continuing with opportunities for further education, training and skills development;

(g) Encouraging flexible working time arrangements such as job sharing and part-time work in order to promote equitable access to work;

(h) Increasing international, mutually reinforcing economic growth and social cooperation;

(I) Improving statistical databases on key social indicators.

40. Finally, the Secretary-General was requested, in the framework of United Nations system-wide coordination, to assist the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council to broaden and deepen the policy debate on employment issues.

41. In May 1997, the Chairman of the Commission for Social Development wrote to Ministers of Employment or Labour, bringing to their personal attention the agreed conclusions and inviting them to use them in their national deliberations on the question of employment and to disseminate the conclusions as widely as possible. Similar letters were also sent to the heads of funds, programmes and agencies in the United Nations system.

B. Other initiatives in the area of employment

42. As a follow-up to commitment 3 made at the Social Summit to "promoting the goal of full employment as a basic priority of our economic and social policies",[5] the Secretariat organized a one-day seminar on world employment strategy to discuss the *Report on World Employment 1996/97* issued by the International Labour Office, and to reflect on policies that may contribute to improving employment projects at the national and international level. Over 70 persons attended the seminar, including delegations, academics, officials from the Secretariat and the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations. Among the topics discussed were global barriers to employment, policies for encouraging employment growth, promoting and maintaining high levels of employment, and means for compensating the "losers" by increasing employment.

43. The conclusion reached at the seminar was that employment policies had become one of the major issues of worldwide concern, since unemployment and underemployment had risen significantly in many parts of the world. First, high unemployment and underemployment undermined social cohesion and stability, unjustly inflicted economic and psychic deprivation on the unemployed and represented a waste of resources. Secondly, it was clear that the much heightened concern about this issue within the United Nations system had been demonstrated by the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, in particular commitment 3, and the re-emphasis placed by the International Labour Conference in 1996 as well as the Commission for Social Development which met earlier in

1997 on the central importance of the goal of full employment.

44. There were various hypothesis about the causes of unemployment. One of the anxieties was that the growing globalization of the world economy would aggravate the unemployment situation, while the other was that rapid technological change was bringing about "jobless growth" and heralding the end of all hope for achieving full employment. All of the panellists agreed that although those anxieties were understandable, given the almost worldwide deterioration of employment conditions and some dramatic episodes of corporate downsizing and job losses, often concentrated in particular sectors and communities, they were greatly exaggerated.

45. Although the world economy was becoming more integrated through trade and other financial flows, and offers mutual benefits and growing opportunities for economic expansion to participating countries, it also generated social dislocation and demands difficult policy adjustments. Some of the concerns included the fact that economic policies were increasingly affected by the sentiments of a globalized financial market; that greater openness also implied greater vulnerability to shocks in the international economic system; and that heightened international economic competition and greater capital mobility weakened the bargaining position of labour, exerted downward pressure on labour standards and compromised the capacity of Governments to implement countervailing social policies.

46. The important conclusion of the panellists was that in spite of increasing globalization, national policies were still of great importance in determining levels of employment and labour standards. Those policies had to be more sensitive to considerations of international competitiveness, but that by no means implied that there was no longer any policy autonomy.

47. The policies for creating productive employment and reducing unemployment varied in scope and included economic, social and political aspects. Sound macroeconomic policies and political stability were major factors in encouraging domestic savings and investment as well as attracting capital flows in developing countries. Education and training were of the utmost importance for increasing productivity and facilitating people's access and adaptation to new production processes and technological changes in all countries. Infrastructure and human resources development were priorities for almost all countries and Governments, especially as knowledge advances rapidly.

48. International cooperation was needed to ensure a stable, open and expanding global economy that allowed countries more room for macroeconomic management without increasing international financial instability. Moreover, it was suggested that international cooperation should be increased in order to counteract the detrimental effects that adjustment programmes imposed on recipient countries.

C. Overall assessment of the implementation of commitment 3 made at the Summit on expansion of productive employment and reduction of unemployment

49. Two features of the global employment situation since the Summit stand out: that the employment situation and trends vary widely between countries; and that the level of government and public interest in the issue has increased substantially.

50. Statistical sources are, of course, inadequate for a comprehensive assessment of changes in employment, unemployment and underemployment since the Summit. ILO estimates that close to 1 billion people are either unemployed or underemployed, which is approximately 30 per cent of the entire global workforce.[6] In the European Union over 18 million potential workers were unemployed in May 1997, 10.8 per cent of the workforce, and the trend has been upward since 1995. In other industrialized countries the average unemployment rate has declined, from 11.6 per cent in 1995 to an estimated 11 per cent in 1997. In the transition economies the official measured rate of unemployment is about 11 per cent and this has been rising with the continuing decline of output. The actual rate is probably considerably higher – as it may well be also in many developed countries. Jobs were reported to be the main issue in the recent Canadian election as they were at the last Australian election, and even in Japan unemployment is causing concern. In the United States of America, where there is a great sense of achievement about the decline in the unemployment rate to 5 per cent, it is relevant to recall that part-time work, often with no benefits, the need to hold down several jobs to earn a living income, and the number of low paid jobs have been increasing. Also, 1.6 million people, more than 1 per cent of the workforce, are currently in prison.

51. In a survey of electoral opinion in eight Latin American countries, those polled cited unemployment as their country's most serious problem.[7] Unemployment, and even more pervasively, underemployment, characterizes most cities in developing countries. Low productivity, low income work – or underemployment – is the principal cause

of poverty in developing countries. There is full employment in only a few East Asian countries.

52. For these reasons the extent of public and political interest is increasing. The agreed conclusions of the Commission for Social Development cited in paragraph 39 above are a clear example. Others include the statement by the eighty-third session of the International Labour Conference in June 1996 on employment policy, the decision of the Denver Summit of Eight to hold a special ministerial conference on employment early in 1998 in preparation for the Birmingham Summit, the negotiation of the Amsterdam Treaty to succeed the Maastricht Treaty with a new chapter on employment, and the attention given to the issue at the ECLAC meeting on follow-up to the Summit in Sao Paulo in April 1997 (see paras. 6 and 7 above). This increased attention is leading to additional policy initiatives that offer the prospect of embedding growth of employment more centrally in national economic and social strategies, thus increasing the pace of employment creation. Nevertheless, the immensity of the extent of unemployment and underemployment show that this change of priorities will have to be maintained for a long time for a major impact on them to be achieved.

IV. Preparation for the thirty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development

53. The thirty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development will be held in February 1998, with the priority theme of promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons. Under this heading, the Commission will focus on the following specific topics: (a) promoting social integration through responsive government, full participation in society, non-discrimination, tolerance, equality and social justice; (b) enhancing social protection, reducing vulnerability and enhancing employment opportunities for groups with specific needs; and (c) violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs and substance abuse as factors of social disintegration.

54. In order to assist the Commission in its work, the Secretariat is convening two workshops, to which independent experts from all regions are being invited, on the following subjects: (a) participation and social justice; and (b) reducing vulnerability. The background papers being prepared by the Secretariat, together with the reports of the respective workshops, will be made available to the Commission. The report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the Commission will contain suggestions and policy options for giving further impetus to the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and related policy recommendations included in the Programme of Action.

V. Special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

55. In its resolution 51/202, the General Assembly recalled its decision to hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and to consider further actions and initiatives.

56. Regarding the preparatory process of the special session, the General Assembly decided that the Commission for Social Development, as the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council with the primary responsibility for follow-up to the Summit, and for review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, would undertake work in 1999-2000 for the preparations of the special session. It also decided that a preparatory committee of the whole of the Assembly would be established at its fifty-second session, which would hold an organizational session in 1998, and would initiate its substantive activities in 1999 on the basis of inputs by the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, and would also take into account contributions by other relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

57. Towards that end, the Secretariat is in the process of drawing up proposals for the necessary preparations and actions to support to the process. Looking ahead to the year 2000, the following timetable sets out the preparatory process already agreed upon by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Year Month	*Meeting*	*Action to be taken*
1997 (October-December)	General Assembly, fifty-second session	Establishment of a preparatory committee of the whole
1998 (February)	Commission for Social Development, thirty-sixth session	Proposals to the Economic and Social Council on social integration
1998 (immediately after organizational session of the Council)	Session of the Council	Consideration of theme of integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits
1998 (July)	Substantive session of the Council	Review proposals of the Commission for Social Integration
1998 (date to be decided)	Preparatory Committee, organizational session	Decision on draft agenda, organization of work, documentation and inputs from United Nations system and others
1998 (October-December)	General Assembly, fifty-third session	Review and take stock of progress made; provide additional guidance
1999 (February/March)	Commission for Social Development, thirty-seventh session	Proposals to the Council on social services for all
		Input to Preparatory Committee on overall review of Summit implementation
1999 (dates to be decided)	Preparatory Committee, first substantive session	Proposals on agenda of the second session; additional documentation
1999 (July)	Substantive session of the Council	Overall review of theme of poverty eradication to contribute to special session
1999 (October-December)	General Assembly, fifty-fourth session	Take stock and provide additional guidance
2000 (February/March)	Commission for Social Development, thirty-eighth session	Proposals to Preparatory Committee on overview of Summit follow-up
2000 (dates to be decided)	Preparatory Committee, second substantive session	Proposals for the special session
2000 (dates to be decided)	Special session for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit	

58. Taking the above timetable into account, the Secretariat envisages the following preparatory steps:

(a) The convening of expert group meetings with the view to enhancing the Secretariat's substantive input to the preparatory process and the special session;

(b) The exchange of experience among Governments in implementing the outcome of the Summit will be facilitated;

(c) The holding of special events by non-governmental organizations, academic and research organizations, the business community and local and provincial governments, to make an input to the intergovernmental preparatory process will be promoted;

(d) The consideration by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-sixth session, in 1998, of the establishment of an in-session open-ended working group during its thirty-seventh session in 1999, to review and decide on the type of input/contribution that the Commission would make to the substantive sessions of the Preparatory Committee in 1999 and 2000.

59. Finally, an ad hoc inter-agency mechanism will be established within the United Nations system to ensure that the inputs from the United Nations Secretariat, funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system are included and well coordinated throughout the preparatory process.

Notes

[1] A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 9* (E/1996/29) and ibid., *1997, Supplement No. 6* (E/1997/26).

[4] Ibid., *Supplement No. 6* (E/1997/26), chap. I, sect D.

[5] A/CONF.166/9, chap I, resolution 1, annex I, para. 29.

[6] ILO, *World Employment 1996/97: National Policies in a Global Context*, Geneva, 1996.

[7] ECLAC, *Social Panorama of Latin America*, Santiago, March 1997, p. 151.

Annex

Initiatives of national Governments on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

1. One hundred and ten Governments have reported on national actions taken in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. They are: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guyana, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe. While some Governments provided information only on the designation of focal points, others described in detail national actions taken.

2. Cited below are brief summaries of actions taken by 40 countries.

Argentina

3. Following the Summit, the Government of Argentina convened a meeting of the Rio Group (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) in May 1995, which adopted the Buenos Aires Declaration on the follow-up to the Summit. In partnership with the other members of the Group, Argentina drafted a concrete regional programme of activities on the implementation of commitments made at Copenhagen. Other actions taken included the holding of an interamerican technical seminar on poverty and a conference on the eradication of poverty and discrimination. In paying particular attention to the issue of poverty eradication, a wide spectrum of social policy was implemented, covering areas such as housing for the homeless, food for the needy, community development and ensuring the well-being of families. It also established a data system to monitor trends relating to poverty eradication. Other efforts include educating people on how to tackle poverty and turning economic growth into social progress through the provision of productive employment opportunities.

Belgium

4. The Government of Belgium took advantage of the observance of the International Year for Poverty Eradication in 1996 to review the commitments made at Copenhagen and to formulate proposals for their implementation. It established a national commission, composed of representatives of the federal Government, communities and regions and with the collaboration of non-governmental organizations, to elaborate a comprehensive strategy with a view to strengthening social integration of the most vulnerable groups of society. In the context of the Year, it commissioned the compilation of a report on poverty. On the basis of the results of the report, interministerial conferences of social integration were held, with the participation of local authorities. Those consultations led to the following actions at the regional level: (a) the Flemish regional government carried out urban development programmes and a cross-sectoral committee for the eradication of poverty composed of civil servants and representatives of non-governmental organizations acted as an advisory body to the Flemish government and prepared an annual report on progress made; (b) the Walloon regional government established within its administration a social integration unit with the responsibility of coordinating activities relating to the eradication of poverty; and (c) the Brussels region targeted underprivileged city areas so as to increase the benefits they receive from its programme on eradication of poverty.

Bulgaria

5. The Government of Bulgaria developed a strategy aimed at implementing the decisions taken at Copenhagen, which is contained in a report entitled "National Programme for Social Development". The report deals with actions to be taken through creating conditions for enhancing social

development, alleviation and reduction of poverty, improving the quality of life, expanding higher employment opportunities, and fostering social integration of the most vulnerable groups of the population. It draws up the means required for the implementation of the strategy by assessing national resources, international cooperation opportunities and the support of non-governmental organizations in that endeavour.

Burkina Faso

6. Burkina Faso established a national committee to carry out activities relating to the follow-up to the Summit. The committee has formulated a programme of activities with the following main features: (a) coordinating all actions launched at the national level; (b) promoting income-generating projects, housing, education and health programmes and involving women in the process of development; (c) developing an employment scheme taking into account the resources and potentials of the informal sector and the need to provide support to women involved in self-employment activities. Young school leavers, graduates and women are the target-groups of special programmes.

Canada

7. In Canada, government authorities at both the federal and provincial levels have taken initiatives, in collaboration with business and local communities, to formulate and strengthen policies and programmes aimed at reducing the number of people living in poverty and providing effective social safety nets. These actions focused on the three key elements of learning, work and social security, and included a new employment insurance legislation; measures to assist low income families with children; programmes for youth geared to enhancing work opportunities; and more flexible transfer payments to provinces to support the development of innovative social programmes. At the international level, Canada contributed to development assistance programmes in support of sustainable development activities in order to reduce poverty and secure a more equitable and prosperous world. Canada is also committed to directing 25 per cent of its development assistance to meeting basic human needs, with collateral, emphasizing democratic development, strengthening the position of women and youth and promoting employment opportunities for vulnerable groups.

Chile

8. On the suggestion of the Government of Chile, the Rio Group established a coordinating body for the follow-up to the Summit, including heads of governmental structures responsible for social policies. The body met to formulate strategies for the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Chile also held a conference on poverty eradication and discrimination in January 1996, in the context of the International Year for Poverty Eradication. At the regional and international levels, Chile has pioneered concrete initiatives geared to the implementation of the outcome of the Summit.

China

9. In the context of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the Government of China has adopted a target to eradicate abject poverty by the end of the century. Promoting social development is an important component of the ninth five-year plan (1996-2001) for national economic and social development and the outline of the long-range objectives to the year 2000. Under those measures, the Government is addressing the aspects of feeding and clothing the poor, expanding employment by the creation of 40 million jobs and increasing the availability of basic education. China has also elaborated a programme for national social development for the period 1996-2010. The State Planning Commission has been designated as the focal point for matters relating to the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and has formulated concrete plans for annual and long-term activities.

Colombia

10. Strategies elaborated by the Government of Colombia in the context of the follow-up to the Summit, considered as structural and compensatory programmes, include seven components: (a) education, culture and leisure; (b) universal social security coverage; (c) improving access to housing; (d) empowering women and encouraging their participation in economical and political activities; (e) improving the situation of ethnic minorities; (f) developing economic solidarity and providing support to small-scale entrepreneurship; and (g) putting emphasis on the respect of human rights and urban security and safety.

11. The national development plan, referred to as "El Salto Social", gave top priority to poverty eradication, creation of productive employment, social integration and provision of basic needs. The Government has also set in motion the Social Solidarity Network, a strategy that aims at improving the living conditions of the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of the population and initiating large social programmes through joint efforts of State-owned and

territorial institutions, non-governmental organizations and the civil society. The strategy has implemented over 13 special projects, including plans for emergency employment in rural and urban areas.

Denmark

12. The first of the Copenhagen seminars for social progress, organized by the host Government of the Summit, Denmark, took place in October 1996, and had the theme "Conditions for social progress: a world economy for the benefit of all". An advance version of the report of the seminar was distributed as an official document of the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fifth session in March 1997 (E/CN.5/1997/10). The final report, and a summary of conclusions, are now available. A second seminar, entitled "Conditions for social progress: meet and create markets", will be held in October 1997. The themes to be discussed are: obstacles to accessing the market; policies for creating democratic markets; and setting limits to the role of the market. The seminars are being organized to pursue the international debate initiated by the Summit and to attempt to clarify the relationships between international economic trends and decisions and the living conditions of people.

Ecuador

13. In implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the Government of Ecuador has elaborated a rural development programme aimed at increasing the productivity of farmers, diversifying agricultural products and creating employment opportunities in rural areas vulnerable to poverty. A strategy has also been designed to support economic growth among the most marginalized proportion of the rural population through the establishment of a fund to provide access to micro-credit. Human development initiatives include the development of primary health services, provision of basic education opportunities and the improvement of the quality of education. As a member of the Rio Group, Ecuador took part in activities conducted in the Latin American region in connection with the follow-up to the Summit.

Finland

14. Measures taken by the Government of Finland on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, particularly the fight against poverty, are designed according to the welfare system based on the principle of full access to services to all citizens corresponding to their needs. The system includes three major dimensions: social and health policy, education and labour. During the first half of 1996, a group of experts in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health studied the current development of poverty and social exclusion in Finland and made proposals to combat them. Finland also developed measures and programmes to eliminate poverty among disabled persons. Education and prevention of social exclusion of young people has been a major aspect of measures taken by the Government in implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. In the field of employment, the Government has put emphasis on policies and programmes aimed at reducing long-term unemployment and alleviating social exclusion. Concrete actions taken include the formulation by districts of regional employment programmes and increasing self-unemployment opportunities.

France

15. Following the Summit, the Government of France decided to maintain the National Preparatory Committee set up in 1993 for the Summit, changing its name to the National Follow-up Committee and assigning to it responsibilities for the implementation of decisions taken at Copenhagen. Composed of government officials, social partners and representatives of non-governmental organizations, the Committee has carried out a wide range of activities. It began its work by holding a meeting in February 1996 to define priority issues. The Committee has also launched a national awareness-raising campaign on the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. It prepared a note on the process of globalization and related social issues for the Group of Seven at its summit held at Lyon, France, in June 1996. In November 1996, the Committee reviewed actions carried out at the local level, assessed the work of the Third Committee of the General Assembly, discussed issues relating to the preparation of a green paper on social cohesion and prepared a report on its work that was presented to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fifth session in February 1997.

Gabon

16. The Government of Gabon prepared a comprehensive report on measures taken to implement the outcomes of the Summit. The report identified seven areas of activities to focus on: (a) food security, to be acquired through provision of financial assistance; (b) the building and strengthening of social infrastructures which would support activities aimed at fighting poverty; (c) a project for the construction of 1,000 houses, launched with the assistance of the African Housing Fund; (d) with the support of the African Development Bank and the American Peace Corps, projects

aimed at building education and training infrastructures; (e) to tackle unemployment, the creation of a national bureau of employment to streamline and manage labour-related data and information and opportunities for placement of job seekers; (f) health and social welfare programmes which have been given the principal objective of providing access to universal coverage of the population; and (g) the advancement of women, for which the Government is elaborating a new bill to strengthen measures protecting the rights of the mother and the child and supporting the establishment of organizations for women.

Ghana

17. Ghana established a National Development Planning Commission charged with implementing and monitoring the Government's macroeconomic and sectoral policies to ensure that broad-based, sustained economic growth and development meets the aspirations of all members of its society. A comprehensive development policy document called "Ghana Vision 20/20: The First Step" was being translated into a national programme of action or reference document informing the entire community of the enabling environment for the country's priority social and economic activities. Emphasis has been put on national coordination mechanisms, capacity-building and mobilization of internal and external resources to ensure effective implementation.

Germany

18. In addition to a sophisticated social security system providing assistance to the weaker sections of the population, the Federal Government of Germany has recently enacted a reform of social assistance legislation along the line of commitments made at Copenhagen. The new legislation aims at supporting more strongly incentives available to recipients of social assistance so as to help them find work through development of vocational skills. The Government has also kept the parliament and the public informed of the latest developments in the field of social development by publishing a series of reports on special groups and particular circumstances under which they live. Studies and surveys have been carried out and specialized conferences held on such topics as the cost of living with regard to children, housing for low-income households, indebtedness and debt counselling services, helping people find employment and new approaches in the care of the elderly. Germany has also developed projects designed to benefit the poorer groups of the population. The main focus of the German development cooperation is on efforts to combat poverty; protection of the environment and resources; education and training; with participating and self-help as the basic principles.

India

19. Initiatives taken by the Government of India on the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action have been integrated into activities designed under the eighth national plan. The initiatives have the following objectives: (a) generation of adequate employment to achieve full employment by the turn of the century; (b) containment of population growth through people's active cooperation and supported by an effective scheme of incentives and disincentives; (c) universalization of elementary education and complete eradication of illiteracy among the people in the age group of 15 to 35 years; (d) provision of safe drinking water and primary health care facilities, including immunization, accessible to all villages and the entire population, and the complete elimination of scavenging; (e) growth and diversification of agriculture to achieve self-sufficiency in food and generate a surplus for exports; and (f) strengthening the infrastructure (energy, transport, communication, irrigation) in order to support the growth process on a sustainable basis.

Ireland

20. Following the Summit in March 1995, the Government of Ireland established a high-level intergovernmental policy committee to oversee the development of a national anti-poverty strategy to address issues relating to poverty and social exclusion. The Committee is composed of senior officials of all relevant government departments and national agencies, and chaired by the Prime Minister. It prepared and published a statement setting out the nature and extent of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland, and requested inputs from voluntary and community organizations, social partners and other interested bodies and individuals. More than 300 contributions were received, evaluated and published. Regional seminars to discuss those contributions were held in various locations of the country. From the submissions received and the development of the anti-poverty statement, five key themes have been identified. They include: (a) educational disadvantage; (b) unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment; (c) income adequacy; (d) disadvantaged urban communities with a concentration of poverty; and (e) poverty in rural areas. Five working groups have been established to address the themes identified, focusing on policy instruments and institutional mechanisms.

21. The Government of Ireland recently published a national anti-poverty strategy, "Sharing in Progress", which represents a unique initiative in the development of public policy in Ireland, it being the first time that an Irish Government has formulated a strategic plan to address the issue of social exclusion in its society. The top priority of the Strategy is to reduce the 9 to 15 per cent of the Irish population who have been identified as consistently poor to under 5 to 10 per cent by the year 2007.

Islamic Republic of Iran

22. The Islamic Republic of Iran's development strategies, policy plans, and programmes are being reoriented towards a people-centred, human development approach. A large portion of total public expenditure has been allocated to social development and poverty alleviation, with the goal of reaching 48 per cent by 1997. The "national project of poverty eradication" was adopted in September 1996, with the major goals of identifying the economic hardship of the people, creating appropriate grounds and opportunities for full employment of both men and women, addressing the concerns of vulnerable groups, in particular the disabled and the elderly. The Government has also taken steps to improve the economic conditions of people in lower income brackets by forcing agricultural support programmes through subsidized input and guaranteed price floors for the output, inflation adjusted minimum wages for manufacturing workers, low price of public utilities for the lower consumption levels and subsidized housing.

Israel

23. Israel is committed to the objectives of the Summit and has recently taken a number of steps to implement national initiatives in the spirit of the recommendations contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Efforts have been aimed at sustained economic growth through strengthening the peace process, investing in technology, expanding capital investment and employment opportunities. The Government of Israel has identified specific social welfare measures for vulnerable social groups. Those measures include: (a) increasing expenditures for income maintenance and social services; (b) providing better health services; (c) enhancing education opportunities; and (d) providing better access to housing. Resource allocation for the care of children at risk, prevention of family violence, and expansion of services and improvement of the quality of life for the elderly are parts of the social welfare scheme.

Jamaica

24. In its activities aimed at implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the Government of Jamaica has put emphasis on eradication of poverty. In this regard, a national poverty eradication programme was developed, encompassing the following elements: a long-term strategy to improve education and training opportunities; a sound welfare system; and geographically targeted measures involving multifaced poverty reduction activities in deprived communities. The programme was the result of a national conference on poverty held in May 1995, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme. The Planning Institute of Jamaica has undertaken an extensive review of the problems of poverty and unemployment, and their level of severity. Sixty programmes to eradicate poverty were launched, focusing on the development of human resources through investment and social policy reform. The Government has taken other initiatives in areas such as human resource development, involving actors of civil society in social development policies and programmes, expanding the micro-enterprise sector and creating a social investment fund with the assistance of the World Bank. The involvement of civil society in social development was encouraged and the labour market had been reformed to provide more employment opportunities.

Malawi

25. Actions taken by the Government of Malawi on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit include amending its Constitution so as to create a conducive and enabling environment for the formulation and implementation of social development policy and programmes. The Government also approved a policy framework for a poverty alleviation programme. Free primary education has been targeted as a long-term goal towards eradicating poverty. The integration in society of marginalized groups, particularly girls and women, has been also identified as a priority. A social investment programme (known as Malawi Social Action Fund) is being piloted, with the objective of developing social infrastructure at the grass-roots level. In addition, various credit schemes are being formulated to provide capital to poor people wishing to create self-employment opportunities.

Mexico

26. In honouring the commitments made at the Summit, the Government of Mexico has formulated a national strategy to alleviate the plight of poverty. Elaborated with

the contribution of representatives of various sectors of society, the strategy is based on the national development plan for the period 1995-2000, which includes a social capital element. Main elements of the plan are: (a) providing equal opportunities to all citizens regarding social services; (b) increasing the well-being and living standards of the population; and (c) giving priority to the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Mongolia

27. In Mongolia, the national committee established for the preparation of the Summit had been mandated to ensure nationwide coordination of follow-up activities to the Summit. Prior to this, the Government had adopted a poverty alleviation programme and a study on social conditions in the country was carried out. On the basis of the study, Mongolia launched a poverty eradication programme aiming at reducing the number of poor people from 26 per cent to 10 per cent by the year 2000. While most of the activities of the programme are being carried out at the local level, a poverty alleviation committee has been set up to coordinate the programme at the national level.

Netherlands

28. The Government of the Netherlands has been active in implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. It co-sponsored the Oslo 20/20 Conference with the Government of Norway, held in April 1996. During the ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at Midrand, South Africa, an agreement was signed whereby the Netherlands would contribute US$ 1 million to a trust fund in support of programmes developed in the least developed countries. The Netherlands has been providing support to the poverty assessments programme undertaken by the World Bank. In the context of the follow-up to the Summit, non-governmental organizations have conducted activities to complement governmental actions. Those include publications, and national, regional and local conferences. In April 1996, the non-governmental organizations published a document entitled "A Social Mirror" on the social policy of the Government as a basis for further discussions. The Government has also provided the non-governmental organizations with financial support to implement their activities related to the follow-up to the Summit.

New Zealand

29. The Government of New Zealand introduced several significant economic and social reforms consistent with the commitments made at Copenhagen. During the past two years, on the recommendation of a task force, the Government has adopted policies to improve employment opportunities, with emphasis on young unemployed and long-term unemployed. New Zealand has also launched a comprehensive set of targeted income support programmes with supplementary programmes to meet individual and family needs. The Government recently announced a package of tax reductions and family assistance measures that will increase the net income of all low-income families with dependent children.

Norway

30. The Government of Norway has, for a long time, considered its commitment to the alleviation of poverty and suffering in developing countries as a moral imperative and an integral part of its development assistance. In spring 1996 the Government submitted to the Parliament a White Paper that gave an overview of the basic measures and principles for poverty reduction in Norwegian development assistance. As a follow-up to the Summit, Norway hosted a meeting at Oslo in April 1996 on the 20/20 initiative, at which the Oslo Consensus on 20/20 was adopted. A central aspect of the consensus was the commitment to the goal of universal access to basic social services.

Pakistan

31. Prior to the Summit, Pakistan implemented, with external financial support, the Social Action Programme I aimed at addressing primary education needs, basic health care, family planning and water supply in rural areas. Since the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, Pakistan has created an enabling environment to meet the objective of full employment and eradication of poverty, and the challenge of negative effects of economic reforms on social programmes. In addition, a number of measures have been taken to provide relief to the disadvantaged and marginalized groups of society. These steps were incremental to the implementation of the Social Action Programme Project II, which targeted those groups specifically. Concrete measures included a rural support programme through non-governmental organizations, establishment of vocational and technical training centres, construction of farm-to-market roads, electrification of villages, financial and technical assistance to non-governmental organizations under a participatory development programme, provision of loans to unemployed persons for establishing their own business, provision of technical and financial assistance to micro-enterprises, and the establishment of the Pakistan poverty alleviation Fund.

Peru

32. In implementing the outcome of the Summit, the Government of Peru has put emphasis on improving the quality of life of the population. It has targeted employment creation, poverty eradication and social and economic integration of the most vulnerable groups of the population. The part of the national budget allocated to development programmes and projects shifted from 37 per cent in 1995 to 40 per cent in 1996. The Government has also achieved major economic successes in stabilizing the rise of inflation, increasing economic growth and fighting poverty and destitution. Peru has established a strategy to reduce extreme poverty by 50 per cent by the year 2000, which will leave less than 10 per cent of the population in extreme poverty.

Philippines

33. The Government of the Philippines established a World Summit for Social Development Multisectoral Committee to coordinate activities connected to the follow-up to the Summit and other United Nations international conferences. Main areas of responsibility of the Committee include:(a) ensuring the full implementation of the recommendations of the Summit; (b) submitting regular progress reports to the Social Development Committee, the President, the Parliament and the United Nations; (c) mobilizing various governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, peoples' organizations and other actors of civil society to work together in implementing the outcome of the Summit; (d) preparing a monitoring mechanism for the follow-up to the Summit; and (e) promoting awareness-raising campaign of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

34. The Social Reform Agenda of the Philippines had a three-point agenda: access to quality basic services; access to productive resources and asset reforms; and institution-building and participation in governance. On employment expansion, the Philippine Government has embarked upon the Comprehensive Employment Strategy Programme, which emphasizes employment generation, promoting labour welfare, and human resource development focussed on providing skills for productive employment.

Poland

35. Poland has formulated multidimensional strategies and socio-economic programmes in conformity with the recommendations stemming from the Summit. Its current social security scheme was undergoing a period of complex reforms and unemployment insurance was being developed, with emphasis on the promotion of economic activity of the unemployed in small towns and in rural areas, as well as the disabled.

Republic of Korea

36. In fulfilling the objectives set out by the Summit, the Government of the Republic of Korea formulated the framework for the national welfare of the twenty-first century, which aimed at attaining a higher standard of living, expanding social and welfare services and improving the social insurance system. At the international level, the Republic of Korea reaffirmed its pledge to vigorously support efforts aimed at implementing the Summit commitments. It set forth the objective not only to expand the scale of its official development assistance, but also to provide technical training for more than 30,000 persons from developing countries by the year 2010.

Romania

37. The Summit provided the ground for reviewing and developing the existing social strategy and laws of Romania. The Government has reinforced actions devoted to improving living standards and enhancing social integration. Among the actions were a project for the development of social services; a pilot programme for poverty eradication; measures for enhancing the protection of children; aids to the elderly, the disabled, families without income or with low income; youth training and access to jobs; and granting credits for the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises. One of the major objectives of the Romanian Governing Programme is the protection of population against the social costs of the transition to market economy.

Russian Federation

38. In following up the commitments made at the Summit, the Russian Federation has established a Council on Social Development Questions. The objectives of the Council are to prepare and conduct activities geared to the implementation of decisions adopted at Copenhagen, including eradication of poverty, expansion of productive employment, promotion of social integration and support to persons in adverse social circumstances.

Sweden

39. The Government of Sweden designated the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs as focal point for the follow-up to the Social Summit. The Ministry launched a welfare project aiming at an in-depth debate, analysis and development of the future of the Swedish welfare system, in close cooperation with universities, research institutes,

non-governmental organizations and local and central government authorities. Another new project is a government task force on social integration, focusing on social problems in the three largest cities in Sweden, to analyse the factors behind social exclusion and poverty. In May 1996, a conference on the theme "A Society for All: Forum on Social Integration and Development" was organized by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Representatives of the Parliament, governmental officials, all relevant local authorities and actors of the civil society attended the conference. The focus of the conference was on employment opportunities, adequate housing for all and the welfare of children at their early age. The overall objective of the Swedish development cooperation is to raise the standard of living of people in poor nations. With a view to strengthening the poverty focus, the Government intends to concentrate development cooperation on a more limited number of countries and to strengthen a more long-term orientation, as well as to place greater emphasis on equality issues.

Switzerland

40. In the context of the International Year for Poverty Eradication, the Government of Switzerland carried out a number of activities relating to the follow-up to the Summit. In February 1996, the Ministers for the Interior and Foreign Affairs launched the Year with much publicity. A discussion followed the event. It brought together the two Ministers, government officials, the media and non-governmental organizations working in the field of poverty eradication in Switzerland and in developing countries. The Minster of the Interior announced, at this occasion, the creation of a fund of SwF 300,000 to support projects aimed at fighting poverty in Switzerland. At the request of the conference of ministers of social affairs of the cantons, a meeting took place at Berne on 5 July 1996. It offered a forum for discussion to political leaders, members of the Parliament, officials of the civil service and representatives of charity organizations. The main objective of the meeting was to review strategies and means for improving the cooperation between public and private organizations active in the area of poverty eradication. Switzerland took other steps regarding coordination of actions relating to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action at the international level.

Thailand

41. The Government of Thailand has designated the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board as its focal point for the implementation and monitoring of the Summit follow-up. Thailand's five-year national economic and social development plan (1997-2001) is consistent with the goals of the Summit. The plan has mapped three strategies: strengthening the national economy by promoting equitable income distribution; promoting social integration and social justice; and improving capacity-building through the development of national administration. The plan also gives consideration to commitment 2 of the Summit, with a target of reducing the number of poor people to below 10 per cent by the end of the year 2000.

Ukraine

42. Ukraine drafted a policy instrument on the basic priorities of public authorities in the implementation of the final documents of the Summit. The document provides for nationwide measures aimed at strengthening economic and social development programmes; stimulating production in factories; improving the flow of credits; intensifying investments; and accelerating the process of agrarian reform. The Government is also undertaking several social programmes for the advancement of women and the family, protection of mothers and children, family planning and for disabled persons. In the context of the International Year for Poverty Eradication, the Government has established and developed a system to monitor poverty and to collect and review data and information relating to its root causes and the different forms it takes.

United Republic of Tanzania

43. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania developed in 1996 a national policy on poverty as its major policy instrument for the follow-up to the Summit. In this context, a country strategy note on poverty eradication was prepared, which identified priorities, challenges and suggested practical measures to combat poverty. The Government also held workshops, seminars and meetings nationwide involving a cross-section of people and institutions from academia, representatives of donor countries, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. As an ongoing activity, the Government, in collaboration with the World Bank, has prepared a country economic memorandum on poverty alleviation. It established a Poverty Eradication Division under the Vice-President's Office with as main responsibilities coordination of actions by different stakeholders involved in poverty eradication in the country.

United States of America

44. In implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, the United States of America has developed a comprehensive programme encompassing national as well as international dimensions. The following elements deal mostly with international measures: (a) universal access to basic education and completion of primary education by 80 per cent of primary school-age children; (b) life expectancy of not less than 60 years in any country (United States life expectancy is 76 years); (c) reduction of the mortality rates of infants and children under five years of age; (d) reduction in maternal mortality; (e) achieve food security by ensuring safe and nutritionally adequate food supply and access to enough food for all; (f) primary health care for all; (g) access through primary health-care system to reproductive health for all people of appropriate ages; (h) eradication, elimination or control of major diseases constituting global health problems; (i) reduction in the adult illiteracy rate; (j) access to safe drinking water in sufficient quantities and proper sanitation for all; and (k) improving the availability of affordable and adequate shelter for all. At the national level, the Government has undertaken efforts to support social development, including increasing the minimum wage, reforming health insurance policies, reducing the national deficit and providing tax credits for working families with children.

Venezuela

45. The Government of Venezuela adopted a series of measures in line with the commitments made at the Summit. A new development strategy was designed to generate economic productivity and social equity. A major component of this strategy was strengthening organizational capacities among the population so as to stimulate development of community programmes. Venezuela has been working with other countries of Latin America to identify new and creative ways to combat poverty. Its commitment to eradicate poverty comprises three basic areas: a system of services targeting low-income families through direct subsidies, subsidies for education and for the care of the elderly; revision of the current legislation to guarantee universal access to the job market; and training programmes oriented to non-traditional activities.